DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 140 883 JC 770 327

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TITLE Results of the Student Skills Assessment Surveys.
INSTITUTION Lane Community Coll., Eugene, Oreg.
PUB DATE 20 May 76
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Ability Identification; Basic Skills; College Faculty; Community Colleges; Educational Problems; Institutional Research; *Junior Colleges; Junior College Students; *Language Skills; Questionnaires; School Surveys; *Student Ability; Student Attitudes; *Student Needs; Student Personnel Services; Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Surveys of 150 full-time faculty and a stratified sample of 1,111 full- and part-time students at Lane Community College were conducted in order to obtain information on the skill levels of students, as perceived by faculty, and on educational needs and availability of information on student services, as perceived by students. A majority of both faculty and student respondents agreed that reading comprehension and listening skills were above average in importance, and that oral reading skill was of little importance. Seventy-seven percent of the faculty and 51% of the students felt that testing prior to registration for the purposes of placement and guidance would be helpful. However, discrepancies between faculty and student perceptions were found concerning areas in which students were having difficulty; the majority of the faculty identified skill deficiencies in the language arts areas of reading comprehension, English grammar, spelling, and essay writing, while few students perceived these deficiencies. The student survey also showed that from one-quarter to one-third of the students did not feel they received adequate student services information. Recommendations in the identified areas of need and the two survey instruments with tabulated responses are included in the report. (JDS)

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RESULTS OF THE STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT SURVEYS

Lane Community College is a two-year institution located in Eugene, Oregon. It provides educational and cultural services to all of Lane County and portions of adjacent counties, encompassing a region of approximately 5,000 square miles and a total population of about 240,000. Enrollment in 1975-76 was 24,726. The headcount in credit programs was 11,158, and Community Education enrolled 13,568 people. In its eleven years of operation, the College has served an estimated 120,000 people.

During the Fall Term, 1975, the Board of Education requested a formal report be prepared concerning the educational needs of students at Lane Community College. Of particular interest was the way in which these needs affect a student's placement and performance in the classroom setting. As a partial response to this request, two surveys were conducted. The first, disseminated in December, elicited responses from faculty members concerning their perceptions of the skill levels of their students. All faculty members received the survey. A total of 150 (74.3%) full-time faculty members completed the instrument and provided numerous constructive comments. These results and comments are provided in Appendix A.

The second survey, conducted in March, examined the issue from the students' perspective. A stratified random sample of classes was used and students were asked to respond to questions which primarily focused on their educational needs and the availability of information on student services. The sample was stratified so as to insure the representation of each instructional department. Approximately 6,890 full-time and part-time students were enrolled at Lane during this term. Fifty-six classes were used in this portion of the study, resulting in 1,111 (16.1%) students completing the survey. These results are presented in Appendix B.

This brief report presents 1) a summary of results in the primary areas of focus in both surveys, 2) conclusions which may be drawn from both surveys, and 3) recommendations for future action.

Summary

Faculty and students were in fairly close agreement on five major issues. Two skills areas were viewed as being above average in importance: reading comprehension (84% of faculty and 61% of students) and listening (79% of faculty and 75% of students). The skill indicated by both groups as having little importance was oral reading (identified by 41% of faculty and 64% of students). Sixty-eight percent of the faculty and 75% of the students said that either predictions of students' success/failure or that decisions to drop a course were generally made by the fourth week of a term. Seventy-seven percent of the faculty and 51% of the students felt that some form of testing prior to registration for the purposes of placement and guidance would be helpful.

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Areas in which faculty and student responses differed concerned the identification of the specific skills with which students were having difficulty. Sixty-nine percent of the faculty said at least 15% of the students cannot satisfactorily understand what they read, but only 5% of the students felt they had great difficulty in comprehending what they read. However, 22% of the students indicated they would like additional assistance in this area. While 51% of the faculty said at least 30% of the students had difficulty in English grammar, only 8% of the students felt they had much difficulty even though 18% desired additional help in this subject. In the area of spelling, 78% of the faculty indicated that 15% or more of the students had difficulty, and 14% of the students said they had difficulty with the skill with 28% of the students wanting further help. Fifty-seven percent of the faculty and 8% of the students identified subjective tests as an area in which students had difficulty. However, 36% of the students desired further assistance with essay/subjective writing.

In general, there appears to be a discrepancy between the perceptions of faculty members concerning the skills attained by students and the perceptions of the students. This is particularly apparent in the skills relating to language arts. Student responses also differed between their estimates of the amount of difficulty they had with particular subjects and the identification of areas in which they would like additional help.

Conclusions

After examining the results of the Student Skills Assessment Surveys completed by LCC faculty and a sample of students, the following conclusions may be made:

1) In spite of the discrepancy in student responses to items 3-16 and items 38-46, students appear to desire additional assistance in the following subject areas:

   a. Essay writing
   b. Word meanings
   c. Spelling
   d. Mathematics
   e. Background information
   f. Reading

2) The instructors identified areas encompassing the language arts discipline as those in which students have the most difficulty in performing satisfactorily.

3) Twenty-six percent of the students indicated they had dropped at least one course because it was too hard. Sixty percent of these had dropped only one; 89% had dropped one or two courses; and 97% had dropped one through three courses. It appears that the group of students surveyed is <u>not</u> composed of persons who habitually drop classes.

4) Of those who had dropped a course (289), 28% of the students were asked their reasons for dropping by an instructor, 15% were asked by a counselor, 5% by a department secretary and 5% were asked by other College personnel.

5) Both students and faculty felt that some form of testing prior to registration for placement purposes would be valuable.

6) In general, the provision of student service information to new students appears to be inadequate in that:

   a. only in regards to the registration process did 60% or more of the students (73.0%) state that they received the information they needed, and

   b. only from Admissions did 60% or more of the students (65.5%) receive information.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the surveys and the above conclusions, the following recommendations are submitted for consideration:

1) Additional assistance be provided to students in the areas of reading, essay writing, mathematics, spelling, word meanings, and background information.

2) An in-depth study be conducted to ascertain more specifically the reasons for students dropping courses.

3) The implementation of a testing program prior to course selection be seriously considered.

4) New processes and procedures for providing students with information on student services be developed and implemented by Fall Term, 1976.

5) Areas, other than Admissions, which seek to serve students increase their efforts to inform students of their available services.

May 20, 1976

APPENDIX A

FACULTY RESPONSES TO THE
STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

FACULTY RESPONSES
STUDENT SKILLS
ASSESSMENT SURVEY

I. Rate the importance of each of the following skills for your classes:

	Little Value		Average Value		Great Value		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Reading Comprehension	0	0	21	14.0	125	83.8	3	2.0
2. Oral Reading	60	40.5	38	25.6	16	10.8	34	22.9
3. Content Vocabulary	3	2.0	36	24.1	106	71.1	4	2.6
4. General Vocabulary	0	0	57	38.0	90	60.0	3	2.0
5. Spelling	13	8.7	69	46.3	61	40.9	6	4.0
6. English Grammar	10	6.8	76	51.7	56	38.0	5	3.4
7. Content Background Knowledge	25	17.2	59	40.6	55	37.9	6	4.1
8. Written Assignments	14	9.4	52	35.1	72	48.6	10	6.7
9. Oral Assignments	44	29.3	52	34.6	35	23.3	19	12.6
10. Objective Tests	13	8.9	44	30.1	75	51.3	14	9.5
11. Subjective Tests	19	13.0	54	36.9	54	36.9	19	13.0
12. Basic Math (not Algebra)	21	14.2	39	26.5	62	42.1	25	17.0
13. Listening Skills	0	0	26	17.3	118	78.6	6	4.0

II. Estimate the percentage of your students who cannot perform satisfactorily in each of the following catagories.

	0-15%		16-30%		31-45%		46-60%		N/A	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
14. Reading Comprehension	39	26.8	49	33.7	32	22.0	19	13.1	6	4.1
15. Oral Reading	24	17.1	20	14.2	13	9.2	11	7.8	72	51.4
16. Content Vocabulary	30	20.8	46	31.9	39	27.0	20	13.8	9	6.2
17. General Vocabulary	41	28.2	51	35.1	35	24.1	16	11.0	2	1.3
18. Spelling	21	14.5	41	28.4	41	28.4	30	20.8	11	7.6
19. English Grammar	16	11.2	40	28.1	49	34.5	23	16.1	14	9.8
20. Content Background Knowledge	28	19.7	43	30.2	35	24.6	19	13.3	17	11.9
21. Written Assignments	24	16.6	40	27.7	41	28.4	22	15.2	17	11.8

	0-15%		16-30%		31-45%		46-60%		N/A	
22. Oral Assignments	34	23.6	31	21.5	18	1.2	19	1.3	52	36.1
23. Objective Tests	60	42.2	33	23.2	19	13.3	17	11.9	23	16.1
24. Subjective Tests	27	18.8	34	23.7	28	19.5	19	13.2	35	24.4
25. Basic Math (not Algebra)	32	22.8	29	20.7	23	16.4	13	9.2	43	30.7
26. Listening Skills	36	25.0	41	28.4	39	27.0	21	14.5	7	4.8

27. What percentage of your instructional effort is consumed by students who are not prepared to handle your classroom materials and/or activites?

0-5%		6-10%		11-15%		16-20%		21-25%		26-30%	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
22	14.7	39	26.1	26	17.4	18	12.0	19	12.7	25	16.7

28. When in the term are you able to predict a student's success or failure with some degree of reliability?

1st-2nd week		3rd-4th week		5th-6th week		7th-8th week	
19	13.2%	79	55.2%	40	27.9%	5	3.4%

29. What is the average percentage of students that drop or withdraw from your classes for personal or academic reasons?

0-5%		6-10%		11-15%		16-20%		21-25%		26-30%	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
38	25.8	24	16.3	26	17.6	27	18.3	16	10.8	16	10.8

30. Would it be useful to have a follow-up of those students who drop or withdraw to determine specific reasons?

Yes		No		Undecided	
87	58.3%	38	25.5%	24	16.1%

31. Would the testing of students for purposes of guidance and placement prior to registration be helpful?

Yes		No		Undecided	
112	76.7%	17	11.6%	17	11.6%

32. If curriculum funds were available, would you be interested in exploring alternative approaches to presenting your class materials to students with skill or content problems?

(For example - interdisciplinary approach to psychology - coordinate reading, writing, and content mastery between Social Science, Study Skills, Language Arts.)

Yes		No		Undecided	
86	57.3%	29	19.3%	35	23.3%

APPENDIX B

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE
STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

STUDENT RESPONSES

STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	N	%	N	%
1. Are you a full- or part-time student?	946	86.7	145	13.3

2. How many terms have you been at LCC including this term?

Terms	N	%	Terms	N	%
1	136	12.5	6	146	13.4
2	111	10.2	7	68	6.3
3	319	29.3	8	38	3.5
4	79	7.4	9	95	8.7
5	96	8.0			

Estimate the amount of difficulty you have with the following:

	Little		Average		Much	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
3. Understanding what you read	583	52.5	476	42.9	51	4.6
4. Reading aloud	677	61.4	323	29.2	101	9.1
5. Understanding of words in a particular subject (such as, Biology, Psychology)	449	41.0	529	48.3	117	10.6
6. Understanding words used in everyday speech	864	77.9	204	18.4	40	3.6
7. Spelling	564	50.7	390	35.1	157	14.1
8. English Grammar	523	47.1	494	44.5	92	8.2
9. Background information needed for a particular subject	443	40.2	580	57.2	78	7.0
10. Written assignments	536	48.4	466	42.0	105	9.4
11. Oral Reports	390	35.9	453	41.7	243	22.3

(CONTINUED)

		Little		Average		Much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
12.	Objective Tests (such as, True-False, Multiple Choice tests)	662	59.9	395	35.7	47	4.2
13.	Subjective Tests (such as essays)	391	35.7	512	46.8	190	8.4
14.	Basic Mathematics (not Algebra)	716	65.2	288	26.2	93	8.4
15.	Listening	739	66.8	319	31.9	48	4.3
16.	Following Directions	779	70.1	290	26.1	41	3.6

Rate the importance of each of the following for your class(es).

		Little		Average		Much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
17.	Reading Comprehension	92	8.3	338	30.7	668	60.8
18.	Oral Reading	697	64.2	278	25.6	110	10.1
19.	Content Vocabulary	112	10.2	477	43.5	507	46.2
20.	General Vocabulary	135	12.3	605	55.1	357	32.5
21.	Spelling	262	23.8	550	50.1	285	25.9
22.	English Grammar	235	21.4	595	54.2	266	24.2
23.	Content Background Knowledge	118	10.7	596	54.4	381	34.7
24.	Written Assignments	198	18.1	525	48.0	370	33.8
25.	Objective Tests	147	13.3	548	49.9	394	35.8
26.	Subjective Tests	196	18.0	564	52.0	323	29.8
27.	Basic Mathematics (not Algebra)	412	37.8	411	37.7	265	24.3
28.	Listening	106	9.6	277	25.2	714	65.0
29.	Following Directions	121	11.1	344	31.6	621	57.1

(CONTINUED)

30. Have you ever dropped a class because it was too hard?

Yes		No	
N	%	N	%
289	26.4	806	73.6

31. If yes, approximately how many classes?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
177	86	24	7	1	1	1	0	0	(No %)

32. When in the term did you decide to drop?

1st-2nd Week		3rd-4th Week		5th-6th Week		7th-8th Week	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
146	44.1	101	30.5	55	16.6	29	8.8

Did any of the following people ask your reasons for dropping the class(es)?

	Yes		No		Sometimes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
33. Instructor	80	19.2	312	75.0	24	5.8
34. Counselor	44	10.6	365	88.2	5	1.2
35. Department Secretary	13	3.2	386	95.1	7	1.7
36. Other College Staff Person	15	3.7	377	93.3	12	3.0

37. If tests were available that would help you select courses would you take them?

Yes		No		Undecided	
N	%	N	%	N	%
536	50.7	194	18.4	327	30.9

(CONTINUED)

In which of the following area(s) would you like additional help? (Check as many as you need.)

		N	%
38.	Reading	247	22.2
39.	Essay Writing	400	36.0
40.	Mathematics	286	25.7
41.	Spelling	312	28.0
42.	Word Meanings	321	28.9
43.	Background Information	254	22.9
44.	Content Tutoring	176	15.8
45.	Grammar	203	18.3
46.	Don't Want Help	209	18.8

47. Were you able to register for all of the courses you wanted this term?

Yes		No	
N	%	N	%
721	67.3	351	32.7

48. If no, how many courses were full when you registered?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
108	106	64	39	11	3	0	0	3	(No %)

49. Were you able to get all your courses at the time of day you wanted them this term?

Yes		No	
N	%	N	%
708	66.8	352	33.2

50. If no, how many of the courses you wanted were filled at the time you wanted when you registered?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
101	99	54	29	5	4	0	0	2	(No %)

(CONTINUED)

----------NEW STUDENTS ONLY----------

As a new student, did you receive the information you needed in each of the following areas:

	Yes		Some		No		Did Not Need		Did Not Know Was Available	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
51. How to Register	100	(73.0)	9	(6.6)	20	(14.6)	8	(5.8)	3	(2.2)
52. Classes available to fit your needs	77	(55.4)	21	(15.1)	32	(23.0)	9	(6.5)	0	(0.0)
53. Class content and requirements	67	(48.9)	30	(21.9)	29	(21.2)	3	(2.2)	8	(5.8)
54. Counseling assistance	68	(49.6)	15	(10.9)	35	(25.5)	17	(12.4)	2	(1.5)
55. Financial aid	66	(47.8)	5	(3.6)	41	(29.7)	24	(17.4)	2	(1.4)
56. Student Health Services	35	(25.4)	10	(7.2)	46	(33.3)	28	(20.3)	19	(13.8)
57. Study Skills Center	37	(27.6)	10	(7.5)	50	(37.3)	17	(12.7)	20	(14.9)
58. Location of classes/services	62	(45.6)	14	(10.3)	40	(29.4)	15	(11.0)	5	(3.7)
59. Career planning	31	(23.0)	10	(7.4)	50	(37.0)	39	(28.9)	5	(3.7)
60. Veteran's Office	42	(31.6)	2	(1.5)	29	(21.8)	58	(43.6)	2	(1.5)
61. Student organizations	20	(14.8)	17	(12.6)	50	(37.0)	35	(25.9)	13	(9.6)

(CONTINUED)

----------NEW STUDENTS ONLY----------

From which of the following services did you receive information? (Check as many services as you need.)

		N	%			N	%
62.	Admissions	95	65.5	70.	Study Skills Center	17	11.7
63.	Counseling	82	56.6	71.	Student Activities	3	2.1
64.	Career Information Systems	9	6.2	72.	Student Employment, Placement	12	8.3
65.	Financial Aids	60	41.4	73.	Job Getting Skills Lab	2	1.4
66.	Student Health	12	8.3	74.	Information Desk in Admin. Bldg.	34	23.4
67.	Assessment & Testing	5	3.4	75.	Women's Awareness Center	4	2.8
68.	Career Planning	12	8.3	76.	Business Office	20	13.8
69.	Veteran's Office	31	21.4				

77. Did you talk with an LCC counselor at any time before registering for classes?

Yes		No	
N	%	N	%
98	67.6	47	32.4

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